**Evaluating Educational Technology Integration**

* A common, but likely misguided, assumption of technology adoption suggests that technology use is the best empirical evidence that someone is in fact technologically literate.
* However, a basic premise of Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive learning outcomes suggests that the exercise of higher order skills involves the ability to evaluate proper implementation and usage beyond simply procedural knowledge (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2009). This implies that an intelligent, technologically literate teacher may choose not to use certain technologies for sound, pedagogically informed reasons. A student may decide not to use a particular technology with an equally informed rationale. Assessing the highest levels of technology literacy requires something more than evidence of knowledge and use. It requires an answer for the why question: Why do individuals choose to utilize a specific technology or not?
* Although it is commonly believed that learning is enhanced through the use of technology (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), not all share a common understanding of what technology is. For many, technology is synonymous with computer equipment, software, and other electronic devices, and technology integration means using this equipment in the classroom. However, this definition is rather narrow. For the purposes of this article, technology literacy in educational situations is defined as the ability to effectively use technology (i.e., any tool, piece of equipment or device, electronic or mechanical) to accomplish required learning tasks. Technology literate people know what the technology is capable of, they are able to use the technology proficiently, and they make intelligent decisions about which technology to use and when to use it.
* Motivation to use technology is not enough; students must get past the novelty of the technology and begin to use it because they see how the tools of technology will facilitate their learning.
* Unbridled enthusiasm can, however, lead to misuse of technology. For example, a person who learns to use a spreadsheet may become enthralled with the application and use it in place of a word processor. While this can and has been done, the situation does show how overly enthusiastic users may lack technology literacy at its highest level. To the man with a hammer, every problem is a nail.
* In many ways technology literacy is a moving target (Leu, 2006). Being literate with educational technologies is not a one-time achievement; it is a lifelong endeavor. It involves reflective practice, and one’s skills and abilities must be continually refined. If teachers and students are to become truly literate with the technology, they must be provided with an authentic situation for which they are allowed to select the learning technologies.
* Being highly qualified, however, is not the same as being highly effective. The goal of technology integration in education is the wise and competent use of technology to facilitate learning. As teachers gain experience in the classroom their view of technology importance and potential use tends to change (Davies & Linton , 2008a).
* When evaluating technology integration, a proper understanding of technology is essential, but assessors should look beyond technology use and consider the reasoning behind it. However, reflective practice demands that we critically analyze our methods; in this case, why we use technology in specific situations.